God's
SPECIAL GIFT
to
The Remnant Church

"For the testimony of Jesus is the
Spirit of prophecy." Rev. 19:10.

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Ellen G. White

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THE WRITINGS OF THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

BY W. A. SPICER.

TRULY the Spirit of prophecy is a special gift of God to the remnant church of the prophecy. The gift was planned from ancient times, as the Lord looked forward to the work to be done by this church in carrying the last gospel message of salvation *"to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."* If ever in the history of Christ's church special help was needed, such help is needed now by this remnant church. And, thank God, that help has been given.

It fills the heart with awe to see in prophecy and history the rise of this advent movement, timed exactly to the hour. It is the work of the living God before our eyes! And, timed also to the very hour, with the rise of the movement there came also the gift of the Spirit of prophecy to open to us in a special way the truths of Holy Scripture, and to direct and guide us in a special way in these critical closing days.

The Bible Foundation.

Always, in approaching the part the Spirit of prophecy acts in our day, it is good to look, if for but a moment, to the sure foundation of this gift in Holy Scripture. There is something living and vital about this advent movement. The touch of the divine hand appears at every turn of its story.

Our pioneers, unaided, could no more have brought out and built up such a movement than could Moses and {page 4} Aaron, of themselves, have brought Israel out of Egypt and led them over the wilderness journey those forty years. When the time of the prophecy came in that ancient day, the living God set His hand to lead the movement. In order to guide it in the right way, He placed the gift of the Spirit of prophecy in the midst of it:

"And by a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved." Hosea 12:13.

That was the Lord's way of instructing and guiding an organized movement in the ancient days. And now the time has come when the Lord has *"set His hand again the second time"* to lead an organized movement, this time to gather *"the remnant of His people"* from all *"the four corners of the earth."* Isa. 11:11, 12. It is a world movement, led by the living God.

And the specific prophecy of this work for the remnant church declares that the last church is to keep the commandments of God and have the Spirit of prophecy in its midst:

"The dragon was wroth with the woman [the church], and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Rev. 12:17. *"For the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy."* Chapter 19:10.

The Gift Appeared.

As the appointed hour of the prophecy came, in 1844, this advent movement rose. The people of the prophecy appeared, keeping *"the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."* Rev. 14:12. Soon they were armed {page 5} with the full gospel message for the judgment hour, to carry to every tongue and people the proclamation: *"Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come."* And in their midst appeared the special gift of the Spirit of prophecy, as foretold. Rev. 12:17; 19:10.

In 1844 the Spirit of the Lord spoke in vision to a young woman of one of the early Adventist groups in New England, giving messages to be told to the people of the advent movement. The name of the young woman was Ellen G. Harmon (later married to James White, pioneer leader of this movement in the early years). The frail, youthful agent begged the Lord to lay the burden on someone else. *"All the*

light I could get," she said, *"was, 'Make known to others what I have revealed to you.' ... Said the angel, "If you deliver the messages faithfully, and endure unto the end, you shall eat of the fruit of the tree of life, and drink of the water of the river of life.' "— "Early Writings."* pp. 20, 21.

That young woman rose from prayer, accepting the burden, and for seventy years her voice was heard bearing messages in the movement, and for seventy years that pen, untrained for literary work by any institution of learning, was writing messages that insistently call us to deeper experiences in the grace of Christ, and lead us wonderfully into the green pastures of Bible truth. When the call came, the chosen instrument found her hand so trembling she could not hold a pen steadily. *"While in vision,"* she said many years later, *"I was commanded by an angel to write the vision. I obeyed, and wrote rapidly. My nerves were strengthened, and from that day to this my hand has been steady."—"Life Sketches."* p. 90.

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And what writings came from that pen! The writings of the youthful days show the unwavering touch of certainty. The same certainty in counsel and in writing was shown to ripe old age, when it might have been thought that years would weaken the service. As a matter of fact, we saw that gift in old age doing some of the strongest and most effective work of all Mrs. White's lifetime, meeting subtle and intricate situations that threatened peril to the cause. Again and again we had to say to ourselves, *"Mrs. White never, never could have sent that counsel of her own knowledge."*

Still the Messages Speak.

In that ancient movement, when *"by a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt,"* the prophet continued bearing messages by voice, and writing the instruction from God until the movement was nearing the land of Canaan. Then the Lord laid His servant away; and a little later, under the instruction written, the movement entered the land. As this advent movement nears the end of the way, the Lord has

laid away the human agent in this gift, and with the fullness of instruction in the Holy Scriptures and in the printed volumes of the Spirit of prophecy, in a little while the advent movement is to enter the heavenly Canaan.

These volumes of the writings of the Spirit of prophecy are living words. They deal with the things the people of the remnant church need to know now. In the files of the General Conference is a letter written by Mrs. White in 1906 to O. A. Olsen, one of the veteran early leaders. She wrote:

"The question is sometimes raised, 'What if Mrs. White should die?' I answer: The books that she has {page 7} *written will not die. They are a living witness to what saith the Scripture. Of myself I could not have brought out the truths in these books, but the Lord has given me the help of His Holy Spirit."*

As the later years came, Mrs. White felt more than ever the necessity of haste in writing out more fully the things impressed upon her mind by the Spirit. She cried out: *"I am weighted as a cart beneath sheaves." "I have every reason,"* she wrote, *"to praise my heavenly Father for the clearness of thought that He has given me in regard to Bible subjects."* She longed to hasten the work of bringing out these precious things for *"ministers and people."—"Life Sketches,"* p. 432.

And here these volumes are—written under the inspiration of the Spirit's power that worked mightily in this feeble human agent from youth to old age. They are for us. It is a special gift to all believers. How can any believer live in neglect of this precious instruction and expect to be kept in fullness of blessing in these testing days! The Spirit of prophecy is not something merely to be affirmed as a doctrine. It is a gift for use and service. We cannot leave these books on the shelves and get the help that is in them, any more than we can lay away perfectly good food in the cupboard and live without feeding upon it. These volumes, produced in our day, in so extraordinary a way, are gifts of God to us, who need them for spiritual food if our souls are to live and grow.

Look at That "Conflict Series."

That is the set of volumes that covers the great controversy between good and evil from the rebellion in heaven {page 8} to the end of sin and Satan, and the entry of the saints into the eternal inheritance. As we open these books, we behold as in a pageant the working out of the whole plan of redemption. There is nothing like it in modern writing. Every one of those volumes has a history too long to tell here.

*"**The Great Controversy**."* — That was the first of this series prepared. People of the world hear something unusual in its messages. A *"publishers' reader,"* an expert for one of the big publishers of London, read this book. *"Was Mrs. White an educated woman?"* he asked one of our ministers. *"No: she was not, as the term is commonly understood." "Well, it is a wonderful book,"* said the reader. "It is almost perfect in composition. I have read thousands of manuscripts, but none more beautiful than this book."

We repeat, It is a *"wonderful book,"* thinking not of literary merit, but of the truths given there to guide our feet through the coming time of trouble, which will be a time *"such as never was since there was a nation."* Are our people everywhere reading it? A wealthy Southern woman, leader of society in her town, bought a copy. She said to the colporteur later: *"I never read anything like it. It seemed to me as I read I could see the very picture of the scenes written about."* We know why the woman felt thus, as thousands of others have doubtless felt without reporting it in this way. Mrs. White told of her experience in writing this book:

"The book 'Great Controversy' I appreciate above silver or gold, and I greatly desire that it shall come before the people. While writing the manuscript of Great {page 9} *Controversy I was often conscious of the presence of the angels of God. And many times the scenes about which I was writing were presented to me anew in visions of the night, so that they were fresh and vivid in my mind."*

*"**The Desire of Ages**."*—A woman of New England, a professed Christian, she said, had found her experience with Christ but formal and unreal. She then read this book, and wrote:

"As soon as I began to read it, I felt as never before how real is the gospel story. Where before it had seemed like ancient history, it now seemed like something happening today. Peace came to my troubled soul. I see in Him a living personal Saviour who is with me all the time."

When Mrs. White was writing that book, under heavy heavy pressure to reproduce the scenes that had been caused to pass before her, she wrote to a friend:

"I walk with trembling before God. I know not how to speak or trace with pen the large subjects of the atoning sacrifice. I know not how to present subjects in the living power in which they stand before me. I tremble for fear lest I shall belittle the great plan of salvation by cheap words. I bow my soul in awe and reverence before God and say, 'Who is sufficient for these things?"

"Near the cross! O Lamb of God.
Bring its scenes before me."

A woman of education in Europe found *"The Desire of Ages"* at one of our sanitariums. She was really agitated over it. *"Why,"* she said, *"a little people like you ought not to have this book! It ought to be in the hands* {page 10} *of the great London publishers so that it could be brought to the attention of all. That author is inspired!"* Would there were room to tell stories of other volumes of this *"Conflict Series."* Each book has its history. Each bears its message. God help us to listen, not now and then merely, but day by day.

Then There Are the "Testimonies for the Church."

One might think these volumes would not be so interesting. But they are largely messages written to persons who needed help—just the help that we all need. They were personal messages to living people, and that is why they come as living words to the heart. Besides the personal messages there is vital matter on every phase of life and service. When nearing the close of her work on this series, Mrs. White wrote:

"I have been impressed to call upon the members of our churches to study the last two volumes of 'Testimonies for the Church.' When I was writing these books, I felt the deep moving of the Spirit of God."—*"Life Sketches,"* p. 433.

Every phase of home life, of church relationships, of service, is dealt with in just the way to help the brethren and sisters of today. Those last two volumes just spoken of, were the volumes left for a time by one of our ministers on his train seat while traveling in the Northwest. A gentleman who had picked up the volumes in his absence and read from them said:

"I hold a chair on the faculty of a university in New York. I am continually reading books. But this is the {page 11} *finest literature I have ever read. Where can I get some of these books?"*

Shall it ever be that while strangers from the east and west and north and south catch fleeting glimpses of these books, and recognize something unusual about them, we, the children of the kingdom, to whom they are committed, often deprive ourselves of an essential gift given to the remnant church?

The Whole Shelf of Volumes.

We are leaving out volumes full of treasures as rich as those in any books we have named. Look at the whole list—books for workers (and now that means every

believer), books on health and temperance, on education, on every department of work among us. It is not ordinary writing. When a former queen of Rumania, before World War days, read *"Ministry of Healing,"* she wanted it put in the language of her country, and volunteered to write an introduction. Though in the unsettled times that came, the purpose was never carried out, I believe.

In the pre-revolution times in Russia one of our sisters, a woman of the nobility, in the Baltic part of Russia, had *"Ministry of Healing"* bound in white morocco, and presented it to the czarina of Russia. Our sister had the queen's thanks later, and assurance that she was reading it. When we heard of the queen's sad death, we were glad to remember that she had read that precious volume.

We could tell of cottage homes to which these books have brought the eternal treasures of hope. *"This is our Bible,"* said a Catholic peasant woman exultantly, {page 12} bringing out *"Steps to Christ"* in her own language. *"Lay this book on my breast in the coffin and bury it with me,"* said a dying Catholic man in southern Germany. The treasured book was *"Christ's Object Lessons."* A West Indian man of seventy-eight years always carried the book, *"Christ Our Saviour,"* about with him. *"When people ask me the reason,"* he said, *"I reply: 'This book is my bodyguard.' From the time I started to read it, I have been a changed man."*

These Treasures Are for You and Me

Brethren and sisters, the writings of the Spirit of prophecy are a special gift of God to every member of the remnant church. Somehow—series by series, or one by one-nearly every believer can build up a library of these volumes. The church library surely can make provision for temporary use in cases of extreme scarcity. sacrifice and extra effort, every believer should, if possible, have these volumes at hand for constant counsel. Jesus, walking the way to Emmaus with the two disciples, opened the Scriptures to them by the way, so that later they ex- claimed to one another, *"Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and*

while He opened to us the Scriptures?" In these volumes of the Spirit of prophecy, which is the *"testimony of Jesus,"* the Master, by His Spirit, still speaks to us in the way, to open the Scriptures to our understanding. We cannot afford to be negligent of these things given as special help to prepare us to stand before Him at His coming.

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What Other Leading Workers Have Said

"The writings of the Spirit of prophecy live today to speak words of counsel and encouragement to the church. How thankful we should be for this gift."—**J. L. McElhany, *President, General Conference.***

"Next to the Bible, I regard the writings of the Spirit of prophecy as God's most precious visible gift to His remnant church. Eternity alone will fully reveal what a wonderful blessing these writings have been to the people of the advent movement."—**A. V. Olson, *General Conference Vice-Presid ent for Southern Europe.***

"The divinely inspired writings of Mrs. Ellen G. White should be in every Seventh-day Adventist home. If carefully studied, they will pilot us safely into the heavenly harbor. No family can afford to be without them."—**J. K. Jones, *President, Southern Union Conference.***

"The Spirit of prophecy is like a microscope focused upon the open Book of God. It does not change the word, but magnifies and reveals new details of wondrous beauty and sparkling gems of truth that mortal eye unaided could never behold."—**N. P. *Neilsen, General Conference Vice-President for South America.***

"The writings of the Spirit of prophecy constitute God's blueprint for the conduct of every branch of His work. Our past experience has repeatedly demonstrated the fact that success comes to all those who strictly adhere to the blueprint."—**H. J. Detwiler, *President. Columbia Union Conference.***

"The Spirit of prophecy has meant much to the advent movement. Through that gift our people have had their love for the Holy Scriptures deepened and their understanding

clarified. It may be likened to a telescope which greatly enlarges the vision of God's plans as revealed in His word. The same spirit is breathed through both."—**M. N. Campbell, *General Conference Vice-President for North America.*** {page 14}

"The Spirit of prophecy is God's chosen means of preparing a peculiar people to meet the temptations and to stand the trials of these last days, and to be prepared to meet a soon-coming Saviour."—**Glenn Calkins, President, *Pacific Union Conference.***

"The Seventh-day Adventist home that does not possess the writings of the Spirit of prophecy sustains a great loss. These precious books were given by God to enable His people to grow in grace."—**F. C. Gilbert, *General Conference Field Secretary.***

"In this time of confusion, perplexity, and uncertainty, we as a people need to be united in heart, purpose, and doctrine. This unity will be realized when we follow the instruction and light given us through the Spirit of prophecy."—**W. B. Ochs, *President, Canadian Union Conference.***

"The Spirit of prophecy as given for these last days, is a manifestation of God's supreme love to His remnant people."—**G. A. Roberts, *General Conference Vice-President for Inter-America.***

"I have never found in any other books that I have read, aside from the Holy Scriptures, such spiritual help, such inspiration to faith and to the final triumphs of the gospel, as are found in the writings of Sister White. In fact, I cannot understand how anyone who will read her writings carefully can ever backslide from a deep personal experience in spiritual things."—**I. H. Evans, *General Conference Field Secretary.***

"We are living in days when we as a people ought to know the value of this gift of God to the church. We ought so to acquaint ourselves with the messages of God to this people, given through Ellen G. White, that we shall know what we ought to do in times of crisis, when delusions and snares beset us."—**C. H. Watson, *General Conference Vice-President for Australasia.***

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An Aid in Perfecting Character

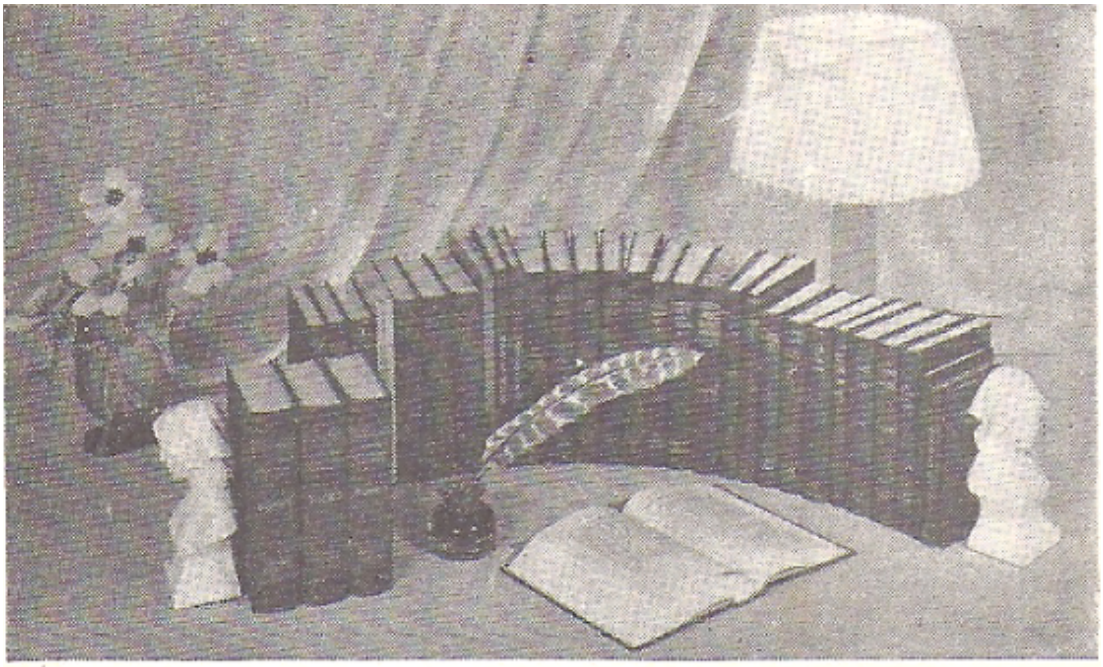
The Ellen G. White publications, next to the Bible, constitute the most valuable compendium of religious instruction ever written. They recognize the Bible as the great standard and gauge by which every act of life is to be measured and by which men are to be judged at last.

They never purport in any measure to take the place of the Sacred Book. They do, however, take the great principles enunciated in the word and draw them out in detail, making them clearer and easier of comprehension to the reader.

They provide an inspired commentary on much of the Bible record. They emphasize the great importance of Bible study, and every volume points men to Christ as the great central figure in the plan of salvation. They point out clearly and in detail the steps to be taken in coming to Christ and in perfecting Christian character.

They give instruction relating to every field and phase of Christian experience and church work. They deal with such questions as proper administration of church affairs, carrying of the message to earth's remotest bounds, gospel evangelism, Christian education, and religious literature.

These books should find a place in every Seventh-day Adventist home.—**F. M. Wilcox, *Editor*, Review and Herald.**



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